# ZAMI REMEMBERS

# AUDRE LORDE

**Thursday, November 17, 1994**
**7:30PM**

**First Existentialist Church**
**470 Candler Park Drive, N. E.**

(Sponsored by Charis Books, The First Existentialist Congregation, and Spelman's Lesbian/Bisexual Alliance)

# REMEMBERING AUDRE LORDE

Vocal Selection by **felecia malone**

Movement by **Carla Rabb** and **Hashaanet Edison**

Introduction and Welcome
**Gretchen Blake** (Host)

"Uses of the Erotic"
Recording of **Audre Lorde**

Drumming by **B.J.**

Poetry Selections from *Undersong*
Read by **Garneeda Phillips** and **Wendi O'Neal**:

"Sister, Morning is a Time for Miracles"
"And Don't Think I Won't Be Waiting"
"Memorial III-From a Phone Booth on Broadway"
"Now"
"Love Poem"
"Movement Song"
"Dear Toni"

"Uses of the Erotic"
Recording of **Audre Lorde**

Original Musical Selection, "I Remember Me"
Performed by Bassist **Jackie Pickett**, Accompanied by Dancer **Carla Rabb**

"Uses of the Erotic"
Recording of **Audre Lorde**

Drumming by **B. J.**

Improvisational piece from *Zami*
by **Gayle Danley**

Drumming by **B. J.**

Poetry by **Doris Davenport**

Candlelight Rememberances
**(Audience Participation)**

*program design by Iris Fawzia Rafi*

*"When I speak of the erotic, then, I speak of it as an assertion of the lifeforce of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives."*
*-Audre Lorde, from "Uses of the Erotic" Sister/Outsider, 1988.*

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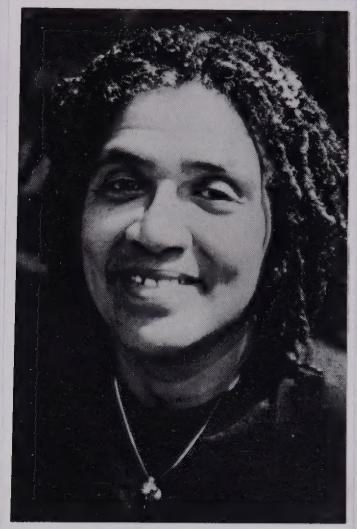

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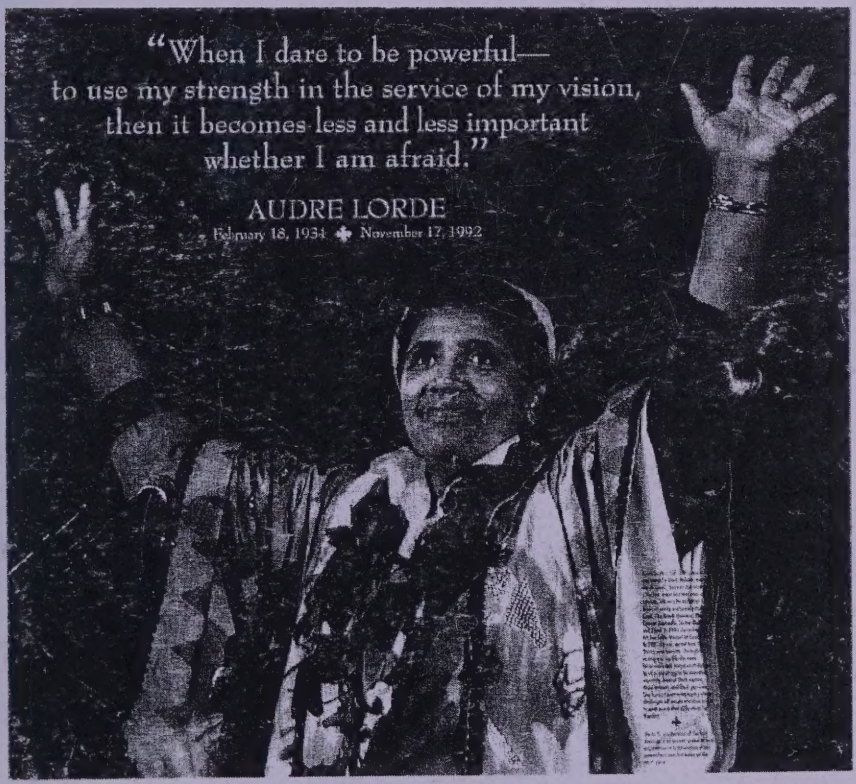
# Remembering Audre Lorde

(1934-1992)



# Audre Lorde

## 'Your Silence Will Not Protect You'

Audrey Geraldine Lorde was born on February 18, 1934 in New York City. She decided to drop the 'y' from the end of her name at a young age, setting a precedent in her life of self determination. She was the daughter of Caribbean immigrants who settled in Harlem. She graduated from Columbia University and Hunter College, where she later held the prestigious post of Thomas Hunter Chair of Literature. She was married for eight years in the 1960's, and had two children — Elizabeth and Jonathan.

Lorde was a self described 'Black lesbian, mother, warrior, poet'. However, her life was one that could not be summed up in a phrase.

## Audre Lorde the Poet

Lorde collected a host of awards and honors, including the Walt Whitman Citation of Merit, which conferred the mantle of New York State poet for 1991–93. In designating her New York State's Poet Laureate, the Governor, Mario Cuomo, said: 'Her imagination is charged by a sharp sense of racial injustice and cruelty, of sexual prejudice . . . She cries out against it as the voice of indignant humanity. Audre Lorde is the voice of the eloquent outsider who speaks in a language that can reach and touch people everywhere.'

Her first poem was published in Seventeen magazine while she was still in high school. The administration of the high school felt that her work was too romantic for publication in their literary journal. Lorde went on to publish over a dozen books on poetry, and six books of prose.

## Audre Lorde the Teacher and Activist

Lorde worked as a librarian while refining her talents as a writer. In 1968, she accepted a teaching position at Tougaloo College in Jackson, Mississippi where the violence that greeted the civil rights movement was close at hand every night. This period cemented the bond between her artistic talents and her dedication to the struggle against injustice. Lorde went on to provide avenues of expression to future generations of writers by co-founding the Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press. She was at the center of the movement to preserve and celebrate African American culture at a time when the destruction of these institutions was on the rise. Her dedication reached around the world when she formed the Sisterhood in Support of Sisters in South Africa. She was one of the featured speakers at the first national march for gay and lesbian liberation in DC in 1979. In 1989, she helped organize disaster relief efforts for St. Croix in the wake of Hurricane Hugo.

## Audre Lorde the Warrior

Late in life, Audre Lorde was given the African name Gamba Adisa, meaning 'Warrior: She Who Makes Her Meaning Clear'. It is a name that applies to her whole life. Her struggle against oppression on many fronts was expressed with a force and clarity that made her a respected voice for women, African Americans, and the Gay and Lesbian community.

Lorde's son Jonathan Rollins recalled the warrior spirit that his mother possessed by stating that not fighting was not an option — 'We could lose. But we couldn't not fight.'

## Audre Lorde the Survivor

Lorde bravely documented her 14-year battle against the cancer in 'The Cancer Journals' and in her book of essays 'A Burst of Light'. In the latter she wrote: "The struggle with cancer now informs all my days, but it is only another face of that continuing battle for self-determination and survival that black women fight daily, often in triumph." She struggled against disease and a medical establishment that was frequently indifferent to cultural differences and insensitive to women's health issues. She stood in defiance to societal rules that said that she should hide the fact that she had breast cancer.

Audre Lorde, died in St Croix, Virgin Islands, on November 17, 1992. Her spirit fights on.

From http://www.lambda.net/~maximum/lorde.html

# Remembering Audre Lorde
## Monday, November 11, 2002

## Welcome:

Mary Anne Adams, ZAMI and Ashley Brady, Witkaze

## Biography of Audre Lorde:

Willie Tolliver

## Readings:

Veronica Henson-Phillips:
essay by Audre Lorde

Frances Wood:
a poem by Audre Lorde, & one of her own

Mia Mingus:
"4 donna during the audre years" and
"absence in the palm of my hands" by Aha Bandele

Stacy Schmitt:
poems by Alejandra Pizarnik

Simone Bell:
reading her own work

Barbara Washington:
selections from ZAMI: A new spelling of my name by Audre Lorde

Beth Hackett:
a tribute to June Jordan

Tammy Leverette:
reading her own work

Waqas Khwaja:
"Lot 's Wife" by Anna Akhmatova

Rachel Handschuh:
"The Brown Menace or Poem to the Survival of Roaches," by Audre Lorde

ADODI Muse: A Gay Negro Ensemble

# Program Sponsors

**ADORE (Affiliated Daughters of Ruth Ellis)** was formed to provide a safe space for African America LBTQA women on Agnes Scott's campus. The organization also strives to raise campus and community awareness of the unique issues facing African American lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer women. Though membership is open to all members of the campus community, the main purpose of this group is to provide an environment where there can be discourse on the latter issues in an attempt to fight homophobia in society (including in the Black community, on Agnes Scott's campus, and within ourselves). The organization was named in the spirit of the late Ruth Ellis, who died in 2001 as the oldest out Black lesbian known, at the age of 101.

**The Women's Studies Program** integrates liberal arts education at Agnes Scott by using women's experience and feminist theory to analyze themes in the humanities, fine arts, social sciences and natural sciences. The program promotes the study of intersections of gender and sexuality with race, ethnicity and nationality in comparative and global contexts. For more information: http://www.agnesscott.edu/academics/p_departments.asp?id=36; (404)471-5039; ehackett@agnesscott.edu

**The Charis Circle**, a non-profit organization, exists to foster the feminist community and to create social change. Charis Circle offers educational and cultural events and programs to the Atlanta community that empower women, men and children to honor themselves and work for justice in the world. We want to create a feminist world where racism, sexism, homophobia, classism and all other oppressions do not exist.
For more information: http://www.chariscircle.org/; 404-524-0304; Info@chariscircle.org

**Witkaze** is Kis-Swahili for "Sisterhood." Since its establishment, members of Witkaze have sought to promote the awareness of African, African-American and West Indian culture, achievement, contributions and history in the community at large and on the Agnes Scott campus. This organization also serves as a support group for all African-diasporic students. Witkaze's goals are to promote a diverse community where African-diasporic students can achieve academic excellence and feel that their Afro-centric needs are recognized.

**ZAMI, Inc.** is a not-for-profit collective for lesbians of African descent residing in the Atlanta Metropolitan area. Our primary mission is the procurement and dispensation of scholarship funds to lesbians of African descent attending an accredited post secondary institution in the southern part of the United States. We also provide a forum and affirming safe space for the voices of lesbian writers of color. Finally, ZAMI sponsors special programming to develop the leadership potential of young lesbians and to honor the life and legacy of Audre Lorde.
For more information: http://www.zami.org/; (404) 370-0920; or email zami@zami.org.